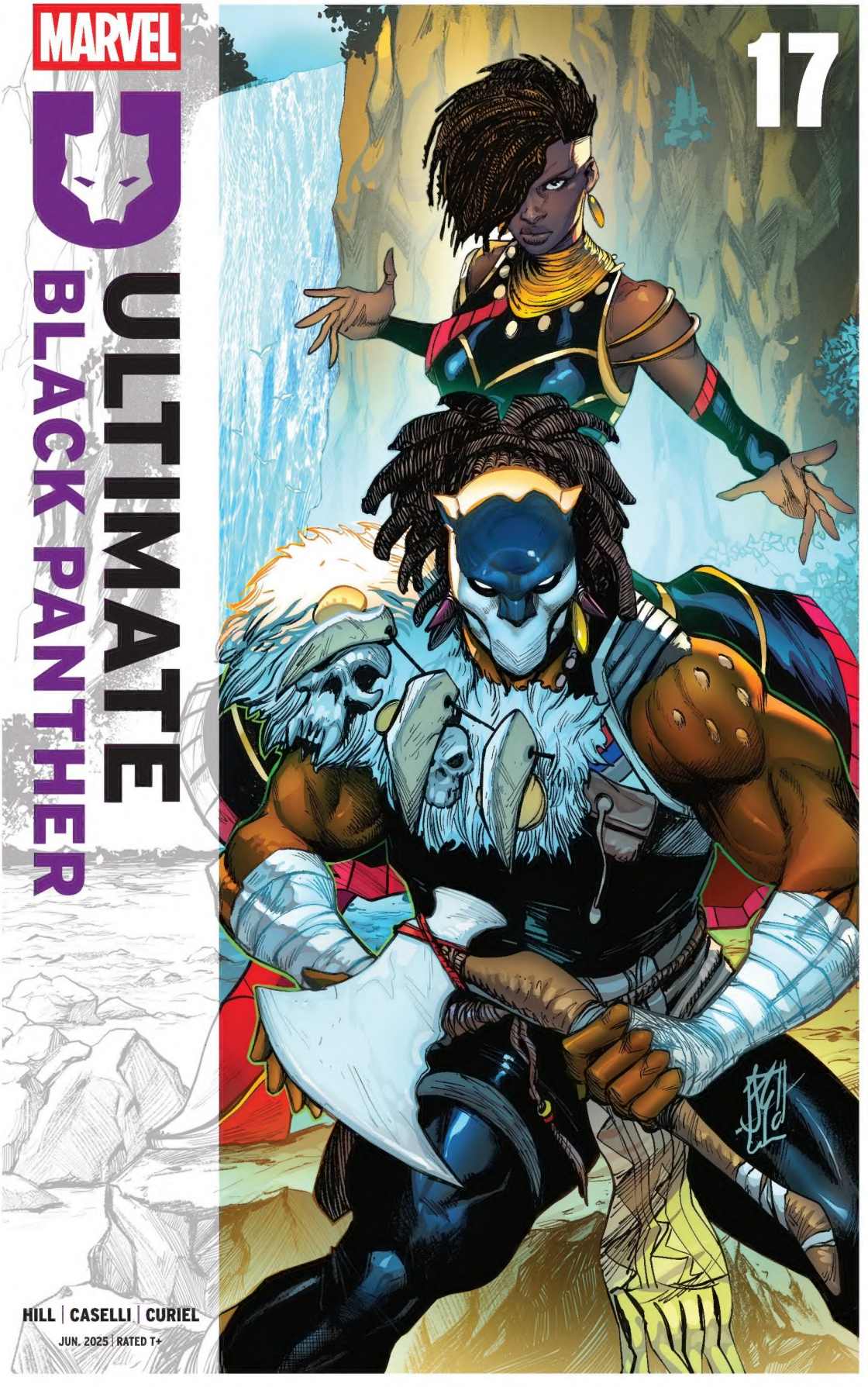

MARVEL
ULTIMATE
BLACK PANTHER
17
HILL | CASELLI | CURIEL
JUN. 2025 | RATED T+

How does it feel?

I could make a joke about the weight of the crown.
But I'm not sure I've ever seen you laugh, Erik.
I'll take it off. I didn't mean to--
Don't.
Answer the question. How does it feel?
Tactically, my peripheral vision is worse.
And I think if I kept it on for an hour, it would irritate the bridge of my nose.
It doesn't suit you to hide behind a mask. You're too direct for that.

That sounds like someone who's a little frustrated with the "Black Panther" of it all.
Someone who is frustrated with tradition itself.
Someone raised in it. Had her choices taken because of it.
Someone who has spent her whole life *serving* it.
You've been free your whole life. I would like to know what that is like.
You've been *safe* your whole life.
So even if I told you, Okoye, I don't think you could understand.
Shuri's alerting us.
Let's see why.

"They call themselves *Machine Men.*
"Paramilitary transhumanists. Black-market technology.
"Most of the time, they're in Eastern Europe.
"Smash-and-grab operations to steal rare earth minerals.
"But they're in Africa now.
"Just took control of an American mining operation fifty miles from here.
"Normally, I would leave the Americans to settle their own issues...
"...but as I said:"
They're in Africa.
And they're holding the workers hostage, forcing them to mine... *for them.*

Advise, my queen.
Erik. Your thoughts?
They're welcome?
T'Challa gave you placement among us.
So they're *necessary*.
The Americans will send their forces.
But the people working there are innocent. And they don't have time.
And it sounds like they can use our help.

They certainly can.
But we're not operating at one hundred percent. T'Challa warned us about vibranium. So we're reducing its use. Running the kingdom on reserve power.
Which means less armaments.
Less advantage.
Then we fight without the toys.
I've never had them. I don't miss them.
Agreed.
And we should get there soon.
So you're up for this?

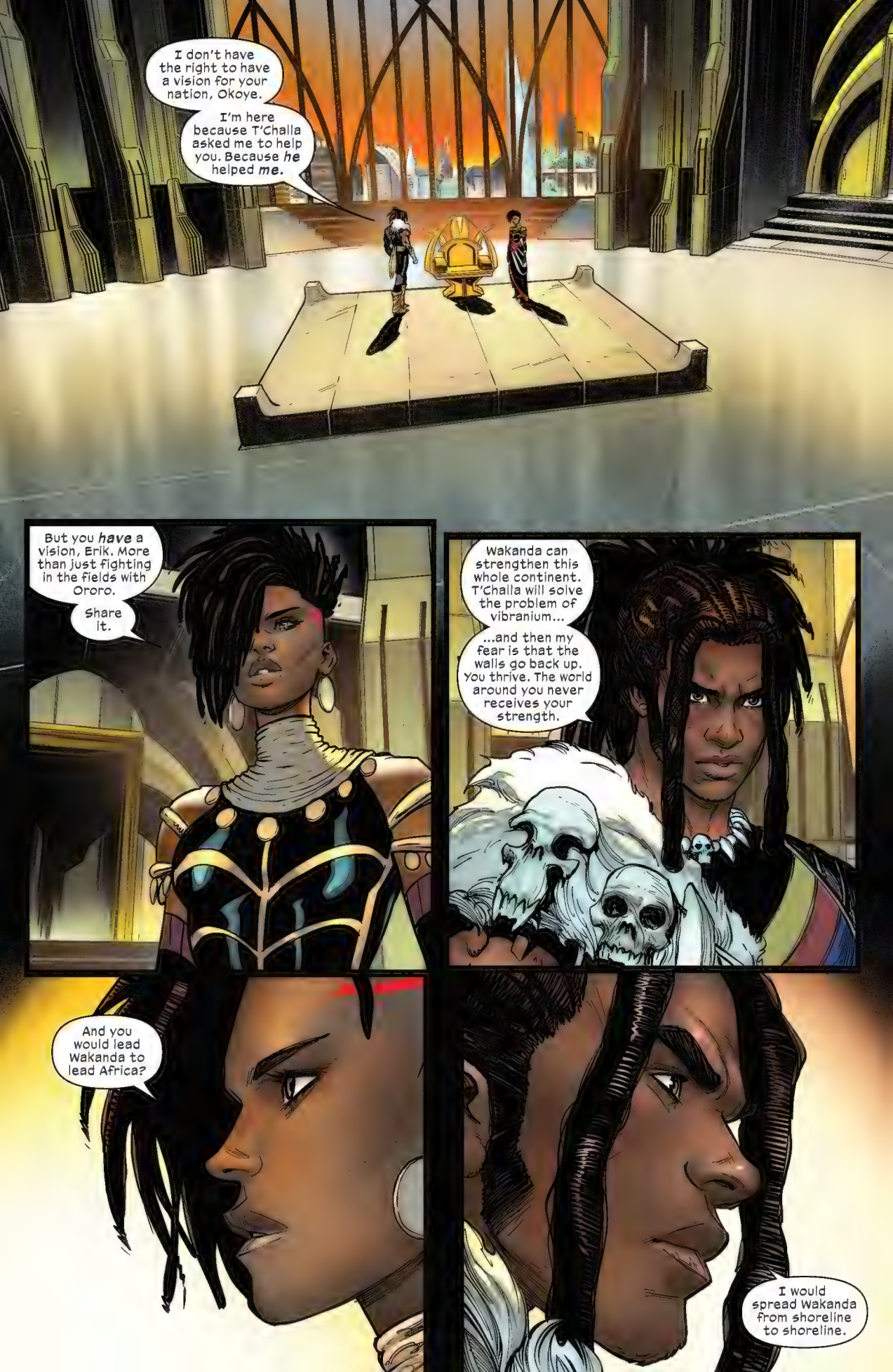
The Dora Milaje are up for this?
Some traditions are better than others, Erik.
Shall we go tonight?

"Definitely."
Erik. Let me find the innocents.
You shouldn't go alone, Okoye.
Alone is faster.
And far more quiet.

SPLITCH
You're going to be all right.

SKKSHH
BRATTABRATTABRATTA
SHLINNNNNK

EXIT
ENTRANCE
"Erik. What do you want for the Upper and Lower Kingdoms?
"What do you want for *Wakanda?*"


I don't have the right to have a vision for your nation, Okoye.
I'm here because T'Challa asked me to help you. Because *he* helped *me*.
But you *have* a vision, Erik. More than just fighting in the fields with Ororo.
Share it.
Wakanda can strengthen this whole continent. T'Challa will solve the problem of vibranium...
...and then my fear is that the walls go back up. You thrive. The world around you never receives your strength.
And you would lead Wakanda to lead Africa?
I would spread Wakanda from shoreline to shoreline.

There is very little fear in you, is there?
I smother it with my anger.
What would you say if I told you I thought you should lead us?
What?
What if I told you that I share your vision?
I want what you want.
What you want is irrelevant.

All that matters is what *must be.*
Matron Imala. *Why are the Vodu-Khan here?*
To serve the will of the progenitors. The will of vibranium.
And the will of *prophecy.*
Okoye. Get behind me.

Imala! This is treason.
This is necessary.
VWWWSHH
NNGH!
UNH!
The child of light will have his path.
None will stand against him.

The Vodu-Khan have waited for generations. For this moment.
Nnhmpfh...
We have always known the true power of vibranium.
And the child of light will be its master.
But you cannot bear him.
My queen.

AAAAGHH!
AAAAAH!
Rarrggh!
Who do you think killed T'Challa's father?
And *empowered* Khonshu?
And moved you all toward *destiny?*
The truth, Okoye.
Let me fill you with it.

Hold on!

VWWESH
Winds.
VWOMMM
Prophecy cannot be stopped!
I saw... in meditation... what they would...do...

Inan...
Erik, what is happening? What do we do?
We accept that Wakanda is *falling*.
And we refuse to let that happen.
Bring Shuri. And your spies. And those you trust.
Use your voice, Queen Okoye.
And tell them...
...tell them they have a *new king*.
TO BE CONTINUED...